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SIPDIS

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TAGS: [PREL](#) [PGOV](#) [EU](#) [RS](#) [GG](#) [LG](#)
SUBJECT: LATVIA SUPPORTS EU OBSERVER MISSION IN GEORGIA

REF: STATE 91894

Classified By: Pol/Econ Chief Tamir Waser, for Reasons 1.4 (b) and (d)

¶1. (C) DCM and Pol-Econ Chief met for lunch with Edgars Skuja, MFA U/S for Bilateral Affairs, on August 27. In discussions regarding Georgia, Skuja mentioned that at the August 28 EU COREPER meeting, Latvia would push for a strong, unanimous statement from the September 1 European Council regarding Russian actions in Georgia, especially criticizing the recognition of South Ossetia and Abkhazia. He said that key to the GOL will be getting commitment for an EU observer mission on the ground in Georgia, but noted that he is not sure of the French position. He was also unsure if formal conclusions from the Council would be possible.

¶2. (C) When asked about Latvia's bilateral relationship with Russia, Skuja said that the MFA is reconsidering its interaction with Russia from many angles. The GOL would like to proceed with FM Riekstins' planned October visit to Moscow, according to Skuja, but they have made no decision on whether to proceed with the long-discussed visit of President Zatlers to Moscow or with meetings of the Latvia-Russia Intergovernmental Commission.

¶3. (C) We asked about comments by Transport Minister Slesers that he hoped Latvia's political position on Georgia would not affect business with Russia. Skuja did not directly respond, but said that the PM and FM were clear in the tough line they wanted to take with Moscow.

¶4. (C) Skuja was concerned about the lack of effective responses by international organizations to Russia. Latvia had called all its ambassadors to international organizations back to Riga to discuss, but found few levers that would be effective. Skuja said that the OSCE was unable to respond much. An EU suspension of visa facilitation would "really hurt" Russia, he thought. FM Riekstins was in Sweden to talk to FM Bildt. Perhaps the Council of Europe, which Sweden currently chairs, could take some tough action, Skuja mused.
LARSON